



ANNUAL REPORT **2023-2024**

**Dze L K'ant Friendship
Centre Society**





OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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PRESIDENT

STANLEY NAMOX
VICE PRESIDENT

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ABOUT THE DZE L K'ANT FRIENDSHIP CENTRE SOCIETY

THE DZE L K'ANT FRIENDSHIP CENTRE SOCIETY IS AN INDIGENOUS-LED NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION GUIDED BY CULTURAL VALUES THAT PROVIDES ACTIVITIES, SERVICES AND INFORMATION FOR URBAN INDIGENOUS PEOPLE.

OUR ORGANIZATION IS DEDICATED TO SUPPORTING HOLISTIC WELLNESS AND HELPING PEOPLE BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT AND SELF-RELIANT.

THE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE IS DEDICATED TO PROMOTING AWARENESS AMONG ALL PEOPLE.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ANNETTE MORGAN

As the Executive Director of the Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre Society, I am honored to present the annual report for 2023/2024, showcasing our organization's dedicated work and accomplishments in serving urban Indigenous communities.

This year, our unwavering commitment to addressing gender-based violence and fostering inclusivity for 2SLGBTQ+ and Indigenous individuals has been at the forefront of our efforts.

Our focus on providing culturally safe services and housing underscores our pledge to establish a nurturing environment that upholds and celebrates Indigenous traditions.

By advocating for gender diverse peoples and integrating storytelling into our initiatives, we aim to confront systemic obstacles and extend meaningful support to those in need.

Despite facing challenges, particularly in Indigenous transportation in northern British Columbia, we persist in our mission to provide essential services. Our modest transportation program, operating for 17 hours a week, remains crucial in assisting Indigenous individuals.

Moreover, our ongoing work in housing development, including low-income Indigenous housing, showcases our dedication to addressing critical community needs.

Our organization places great importance on updating our equipment and engaging in climate-conscious strategies to ensure sustainability and environmental responsibility.

We recognize the significance of participating in climate action efforts to contribute to a healthier and more resilient future for our community and beyond.

I am immensely proud of the progress we have achieved and the positive impact we have had on the lives of those we serve.

Together, we will continue to advance towards a more inclusive, supportive, and empowered future for all members of our community.

Your continued support and collaboration are invaluable as we navigate these critical initiatives and endeavors. Thank you for joining us on this journey of service, empowerment, and resilience.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT, ANDREW TOM

As the President of the Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre Society, I am proud to present the 2023/2024 annual report, reflecting our organization's dedication to serving and empowering urban Indigenous communities.

Our strategic focus on reducing gender-based violence underscores our commitment to providing culturally safe services and advocating for gender diverse peoples.

By incorporating Indigenous practices and storytelling, we aim to address systemic challenges and ensure inclusive support for 2SLGBTQ+ and Indigenous individuals.

Our ongoing efforts to enhance infrastructure and receive guidance from an Indigenous-led board demonstrate our commitment to creating a safe and supportive environment as we look to the next 30 years.

We are grateful for the opportunity to serve our community and remain dedicated to championing diversity, advocating for safety, and strengthening connections to uplift and empower Indigenous peoples.

Together, we will continue to work towards a more inclusive and supportive future.



2023-2024 REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

The Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre has had an extremely busy year with a wide range of new programs and exciting initiatives currently underway.

Below are highlights for 2023 - 2024:



- The Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre Society provided over 100 programs at our three locations in 2023-2024 fiscal year. Our staff continue to provide a high level of care to our community members we serve.
- This year we hosted our **third annual Orange Shirt Week** in September, offering opportunities for community organizations, school-aged children and families to gain greater awareness about the impact of residential school systems necessary for community-based healing.
- On **June 21st 2023 we hosted successful Indigenous Peoples Day Events** at the Indigenous Cultural Centre in Smithers and at the Houston Friendship Centre. These events are highlights for the community, providing a chance to gather together to celebrate Indigenous people, culture and traditions.
- This year we **celebrated our Executive Director's 30 years of service at the Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre** and honoured Annette Morgan's recipient of the prestigious business leadership award for Indigenous Women in Leadership.
- Our new **Houston Friendship Centre building** project development process is now well underway and we are on track to break ground on this exciting project in Spring 2025. This new building will replace our aging building in Houston and is custom designed to increase accessibility and enhance our ability to provide high quality culturally safe services for many generations to come.
- **Indigenous Childcare facilities for Houston and Telkwa:** We continue work toward the development of Indigenous-focussed childcare facilities in both Telkwa and Houston through funding support from Growing Aboriginal Head Start in BC and BC Childcare Spaces.
- **Cultural Centre Kitchen Project** is near completion. We are pleased to be nearing completion of a major renovation to our kitchen which will increase safety, efficiency and capacity of our kitchen facility, increase food security and emergency preparedness.
- We are excited to announce that **Ken' Ulh Ki't Yik, our 37 unit affordable housing project**, led by the Dze L K'ant Housing Society with support from the Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre has now broken ground. This project will provide affordable culturally safe homes for Indigenous families, elders and individuals. We expect to have tenants moving into our building in early 2026.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY CELEBRATIONS

Indigenous Peoples Day is always a highlight for the Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre, a time to come together to celebrate our culture, traditions and ways of being.

On June 21st Indigenous People's Day was attended community members from Smithers, Hazelton, Witset, Houston, Telkwa and surrounding areas.

Our events were hosted in Smithers at the Indigenous Cultural Centre as well as at the Houston Friendship Centre. The events were attended by many school children, parents and families and elders.

We wish to acknowledge our Indigenous People Day Committee and staff who worked hard to make the day special for our community.



3RD ANNUAL ORANGE SHIRT WEEK

WE ARE PROUD TO HAVE HOSTED OUR THIRD ANNUAL ORANGE SHIRT WEEK EVENT IN SEPTEMBER 2023. THIS EVENT IS HOSTED BY THE FRIENDSHIP IN THE WEEK PRIOR TO THE NATIONAL DAY OF TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION AND PROVIDES A SAFE SPACE FOR ALL PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITY TO LEARN ABOUT THE IMPACTS OF THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SYSTEM. THIS WEEK IS PART OF OUR ORGANIZATION'S COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION AND AWARENESS AND COMMUNITY HEALING.

OUR EVENT WAS EXTREMELY WELL ATTENDED AND INCORPORATED THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:

- Trauma informed information on the history of residential schools
- Traditional welcoming and drumming
- Truth sharing and storytelling activities
- Traditional foods (soup and bannock) as well as soap berries
- Crafts and activities for children and families
- War canoe tours guided by our Alcohol and Drug Counsellor, Mel Bazil, at lake Kathlyn for a range of school groups, community organizations and businesses

***Our event is designed to be thought provoking and healing for our community.
Thank you to our team for their strength and dedication toward reconciliation.***





At our annual general meeting in October, our staff, board of directors and membership honoured our Executive Director's 30 years of service with our friendship centre.

The event was a heartfelt celebration of Annette Morgan's 30 years of dedication to improving the lives of urban Indigenous peoples in our community. The event was attended by over 100 community members and involved speeches from the board, staff, family and clients.

OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ANNETTE MORGAN RECEIVES LEADERSHIP AWARD AND CELEBRATES 30 YEARS OF SERVICE

This year, in addition to our Executive Director, Annette Morgan being celebrated for 30 years of service in our own community, Annette was also recognized at a national level, receiving the prestigious Business Leadership Award for Indigenous Women in Leadership.

Annette Morgan is a remarkable Indigenous leader who has made significant contributions to the community. Her dedication, hard work, and innovative ideas have set her apart as a leader. She has demonstrated exceptional leadership skills and a strong commitment to excellence in her many roles.

The Business Leadership Award bestowed upon Annette is a testament to her outstanding achievements and the impact she has made in her field and the community she serves. This recognition is well-deserved and serves as a validation of her hard work and dedication.

While Annette is a leader who often chooses to remain in the background of the many initiatives she guides, she has expressed her gratitude for the recognition and credited her team for their unwavering support. Annette also highlighted the importance of perseverance and continuous learning at UVIC and is currently working toward her MBA in Indigenous Reconciliation.



DZE L K'ANT AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR INDIGENOUS FAMILIES AND ELDERS



We are pleased to have broken ground on our 37 unit affordable housing project, located at 1611 Main St. Smithers.

Owned and operated by Dze Kant Housing Society, the three-storey building will consist of studio, one-, two-, three- and four-bedroom apartments, in recognition of the high need for housing for off-reserve Indigenous families and seniors in Smithers. Ten of the homes will be wheelchair accessible (six one-bedroom and four two-bedroom). An additional six one-bedroom units will be adaptable, allowing residents to remain in their homes as they age.

Kenulh Kit Yikh has been designed in close consultation with the community to reflect the needs of those who will make it their home. When complete it will include culturally appropriate features, such as Indigenous art, a cultural amenity room, a healing room, a community kitchen, and larger unit sizes to accommodate families and intergenerational living.

During 2023-2024 we have been dedicated to completing design and development of the project and continuing negotiations with our funders to ensure that the project meets the needs of our future tenants. We have also been working with the hereditary system to choose a name for the project. The project has now been given the name Ken' ulh K'it Yikh by the Cas Yik House, the name means wetland housing to acknowledge the traditional territory on which the homes are being built. This project is the community's first Indigenous-led housing project.

In 2024-2025 we move into construction phase of the project as well as focus our attentions on operational planning. We expect to move tenants into their new homes in early 2026.



INDIGENOUS-LED CHILDCARE CENTRES IN TELKWA AND HOUSTON



WE ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT BOTH CHILDCARE CENTRES IN HOUSTON AND TELKWA ARE IN FULL PROJECT DEVELOPMENT MODE.

HOUSTON - DLK ENTERED INTO A CONTRIBUTION AGREEMENT WITH ABORIGINAL HEAD START (AHS) ON JULY 24, 2024, FOR CAPITAL FUNDING FOR 37 CHILD SPACES (12 INFANT AND TODDLER AND 25 UP TO SCHOOL AGE).

WORKING WITH THE DISTRICT OF HOUSTON, DLK HAS SUBMITTED THE DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION, AND WILL BE SOON MOVING FORWARD ON A SUBDIVISION PLAN, AND WILL BE ENTERING INTO A LEASE AGREEMENT, WITH THE INTENT BEING TO HAVE EVENTUAL OWNERSHIP.

WE HAVE ENGAGED STUDIO 9 ARCHITECTURE AND WESTWIND ENTERPRISES FOR THE LENGTH OF THE PROJECT. BUILD READY DRAWINGS WILL BE COMPLETED BY OCTOBER 2024, AND SHOVELS WILL BE IN THE GROUND IN APRIL 2025.

TELKWA - DLK PRESENTED TO CAS YIKH HOUSE AND THE OFFICE OF THE WET'SUWET'EN AND THEY PROVIDED A LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE TELKWA PROJECT. IN 2023, AHS PROVIDED FUNDING TO DLK TO DEVELOP PLANS FOR THE TELKWA CHILDCARE CENTRE.

DUE TO RISING CONSTRUCTION COSTS, AHS WAS NOT ABLE TO FUND THE CAPITAL BUILD SO IN AUGUST 2024 WE MADE AN APPLICATION TO BC NEWSACES, A PROVINCIAL PROGRAM TO CREATE NEW CHILDCARE SPACES IN BC, AND WE ARE OPTIMISTIC THAT OUR PROPOSAL WILL BE ACCEPTED.

CULTURAL CENTRE KITCHEN RENOVATION PROJECT WITH SUPPORT FROM NAFC

Background: The Indigenous Cultural Centre's kitchen was in dire need of an upgrade. The kitchen was outdated with many deficiencies such as aging appliances and weak airflow.

We were able to secure funding through the NAFC, hire kitchen designers and select highly efficient and quality appliances with advice from electrical engineers. Our new appliances are fitted with wheels to aid in efficient cleaning and multi-purpose use of the facility.

Goals and objectives: Our goal was to increase safety and effectiveness of the kitchen and ensure we can respond effectively to food security challenges and emergencies such as fire and flood as part of our climate and community resilience goals. This important project has increased our capacity to effectively host community kitchen programming, cooking and foods training programs as well as community lunches, feasts and events.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

We were able to install highly rated fire retardant materials on the walls and ceiling, we installed hospital grade flooring to optimize hygiene. The new ventilation unit ensures we have fresh air supply continuously. The new fire alarm panel, and a separate control panel will effectively keep our kitchen safe, and ensure shut down, and ample fire suppression, should a fire occur.

We are pleased have installed a Combi oven. This cutting edge appliance allows us to cook for 200 or more people, in a very timely manner, as well as gives us options of smoking, baking, and steaming products. The addition of coolers and freezers, allow us to keep, and prep food, for a longer duration.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

We are grateful for our partnership with our funders **NAFC** as well as our partners at **Black Inc** for expertise with the kitchen design and the **Alpenhorn**, whose highly skilled cooks have offered training on best practices using our new equipment.

The upgraded kitchen will not only allow us to increase our food security programming and more effectively host our large community events, it also allows us to continue to grow our capacity to respond during emergencies at the cultural centre.

NEW HOUSTON FRIENDSHIP CENTRE PROJECT



During 2022–2023 the Dze L K’ant Friendship Centre Society has continued to work toward the design and development of a new Friendship Centre in Houston, BC.

The project will ensure our organization can continue to provide much needed culturally centered programs, activities and services to a diversity of community members in Houston, with a particular focus on supporting early years, youth programming and holistic health and wellness for Indigenous families living off reserve in our community for generations to come.

The new building is custom designed to suit the Friendship Centre's programming needs, including providing adequate and well-designed space for cultural ceremonies and activities. The building will be accessible for all ages and abilities with accessible washrooms, ramps and an elevator. The building incorporates a number of key features including welcoming reception area, community kitchen space, private program spaces and will meet all licensing requirements for our child and youth programs.

We plan to begin construction in Spring 2025 with completion expected in early 2026.

OUR FUNDERS

This project is being supported by an Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) – Rural and Northern Communities Program (RNC) grant.

We have also secured additional funding from the following sources:

- Northern Development Initiative Trust (NDIT)
- Federal Accessibility Grant (Ministry of Social Development and Employment)

We continue to pursue funding to ensure this project moves forward on schedule.





We are proud to report that during 2023-2024 the Dze Ɓ K'ant Friendship Centre's programming at our Smithers location continues to grow and evolve to meet the needs in our community. We have increased our capacity to support people experiencing mental health challenges, addictions, homelessness and housing insecurity as well as expanded our cultural programming by creating traditional sewing and beading programs. Our learning hub continues to expand with a wide range of low barrier youth, education and training services now being offered.

SMITHERS PROGRAM REPORTS

- MENTAL HEALTH & OUTREACH
- ALCOHOL AND DRUG COUNSELLING
- INDIGENOUS HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAM
- TRADITIONAL BEADING
- TRADITIONAL SEWING
- EMPLOYMENT LIFE SKILLS TRAINING/LEARNING HUB
- HIV AIDS AWARENESS
- LEGAL ADVOCACY
- FAMILY GATHERINGS
- MMIWG FAMILY SUPPORT
- CAPC (COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN FOR CHILDREN)
- MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELLING
- NEUROFEEDBACK PROGRAM
- HEALTHY CARE PREGNANCY PROGRAM
- CULTURE IS ALIVE (YOUTH PROGRAM)

MENTAL HEALTH & OUTREACH PROGRAM

Our Mental Health Outreach worker program, in partnership with Northern Health, supports the needs of community members experiencing mental health challenges by providing a variety of services. These include, but are not limited to one-on-one supports via appointments, drop in sessions, workshops and referrals. As the cost of living continues to rise and the housing crisis continues we continue to see increased stress for our clients and provide a significant amount of referrals to housing, homelessness supports, food security and addictions services.

During 2023-2024 the Friendship Centre's Mental Health and Outreach worker, an elder and a survivor of residential school, continued her strong connections with elementary schools in Smithers. Our Mental Health Outreach worker continues to collaborate in a wide variety of ways to provide wrap-around supports for vulnerable community members we serve.

SENIOR CHEF

We continue to partner with New Horizons for Seniors fund which enables us to offer our Senior Chef foods program, this funding assists with ingredients and supplies. We offer a weekly in-person group cooking group managed by our our mental health outreach worker. The program is aimed at those who are 65+ on low income. We are able to offer food kits and resources for our participants and often the clients take food home for their freezer.

The seniors enjoy cooking together and socializing. This program assists with life skills and cooking skills as well as overall wellbeing. We have identified that the program has a positive impact on social isolation for some of our most vulnerable and is often their main social contact and connection point for the week.



TRADITIONAL BEADING ARTS PROGRAM



The Beading and Traditional Art Program was established in 2023-2024 with support from Civil Forfeiture grant funding. The initiative is designed to connect people of all ages and levels of experience with traditional beading practices.

The goal of this project is healing and rebuilding project aimed to increased access to Indigenous cultural arts revitalization program at our Smithers location.

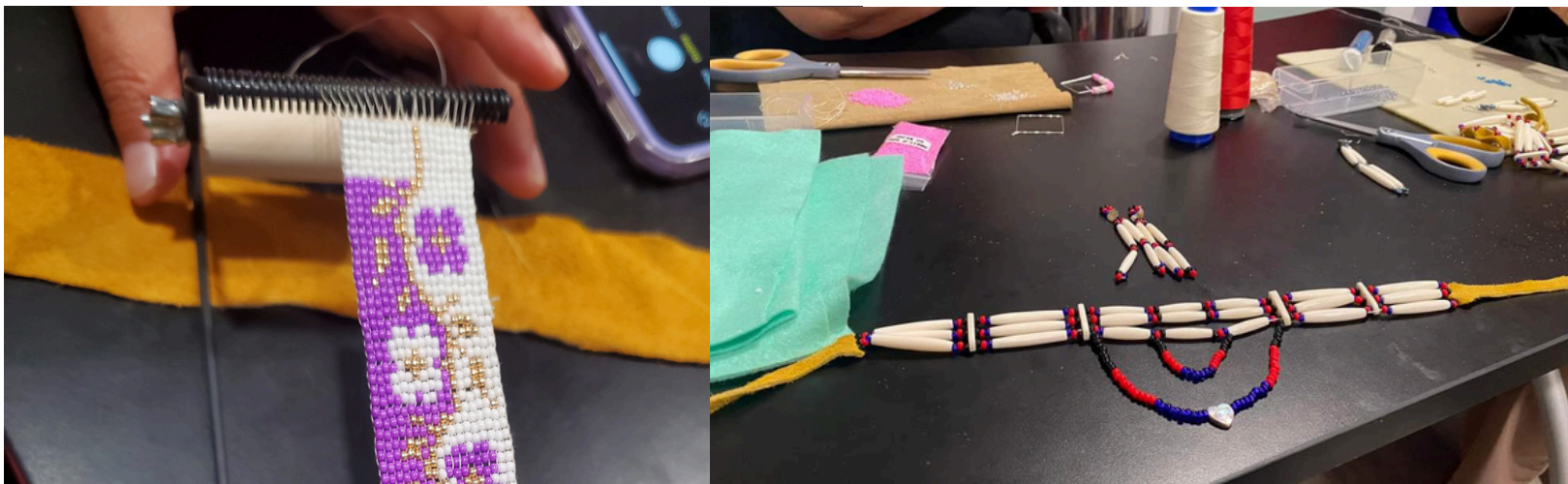
We are pleased to have hired highly skills staff to lead this program who have created a safe and welcoming environment for those who seek to connect with their culture, and provide them with a healthy snack.

During 2023-2024 program has been extremely popular and we are seeing the benefits with those regularly attended including increased social integration, cultural connection and progress on their healing journey.

We are pleased to have successfully applied for funding from NIB Trust to continue this program in 2024-2025 fiscal year.

Program Highlights 2023-24:

- Our program has 8-10 regular clients attending each session and numbers are increasing with many new and drop in clients.**
- In 2023-2204, our program saw a strong increase in attendance as the program becomes more popular. Clients were excited about the projects that they created are already planning many new projects.**



ALCOHOL & DRUG FACILITATOR PROGRAM; ALL CLANS PATROL; INDIGENOUS HARM REDUCTION PROGRAM



This longstanding Friendship Centre program, in partnership with Northern Health, aims to provide non stigmatizing supports for those using substances.

Our Direct Client Services includes:

- One to one counselling,
- Harm Reduction Planning,
- Treatment Planning,
- Groups and Family sessions,
- Information and training for Harm Reduction Principles
- Naloxone Administration and Distribution.

This fiscal year our program has focused on providing support for patrons, cultural competency and safety, as well as working closely with the community to ensure safety in patrols, wellness checks and specific responses to community trauma and substance use.

SUCCESS STORIES AND PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS 2023-2024:

The A&D Program Successfully received Harm Reduction Grants from FNHA and from BCAAFC to form a community safety patrol.

Peer Led Backpack Program:

Our Peer Led Program trains individuals to use Naloxone kits, and distribute Take Home Naloxone Kits and Harm Reduction Supplies discreetly, and without stigma.

One of the Peers who distributes safe supplies to folks with no stigma, and with training and consistency, met with 2440 + points of service last year.

Served 166 clients enrolled in the program with over 4000 Points of Service

Cultural Competency and Storytelling:

War Canoe paddling events throughout the year, sacred fire ceremonies for grieving families of MMIWG and MMIMB (MMIP), storytelling with schools and community partners, leading in ceremonies like the Groundbreaking Ceremony to bless the grounds that the 37 Unit Housing project is currently underway with, and hosting ceremony with the Wellness Team on International Overdose Awareness Day August 31, 2024.

OUR PROGRAM FOCUSES ON CELEBRATING THE WELLNESS IN OUR COMMUNITY - WE ARE NOT ONLY RESPONDING TO TRAUMA, BUT ALSO TO OUR GROWTH AS A COMMUNITY.

INDIGENOUS HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAM

The goals and objectives of our housing support program is provide advocacy, culturally safe services, basic need supports and workshops to urban Indigenous people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. This includes people who are:

- Homeless
- Couch surfing
- Living in overcrowded or unsafe housing situations
- At risk of eviction
- Living long term in motels
- Fleeing violence/abuse

Our program provides the follow basic needs supports:

- Hygiene kits
- Bus tickets
- Food supports
- Tents/sleeping bags, and winter gear
- We also provided high levels of advocacy, referrals and cultural workshops.

Program Highlights from 2023-2024:

Despite limited affordable housing available rent, our program has supported many clients to increase their housing security, including assisting with searches, providing financial assistance for damage deposit and providing "Welcome Home Kits" which include cooking supplies, cleaning products, a lamp, bedsheets and many other household items. We are proud of our collaborations at the situations tables to support many clients in crisis during this fiscal year.

Our program also worked closely with clients facing unlawful eviction. We researched tenancy rights concerning guests and pets, and conveyed these rights to the clients to allow them to self-advocate. In many cases this support has mitigated evictions which is critical given the increasing housing crisis in our community.



In 2023-24 our program served 183 clients and provided:

- Over 3500 points of service
- Over 1000 food supports
- 671 hygiene kits
- 259 bus tickets
- 86 tents/sleeping bags



TRADITIONAL SEWING ARTS PROGRAM



The **Sewing and Traditional Arts program** is designed to provide clients with the opportunity to learn a new skill, make projects and connect with their culture. The program provides all materials to those participating as well as creating a safe environment for learning and building community connections.

This program has been supported by Civil Forfeiture grant funding and our goal to increase our organizational capacity through this new program to allow Indigenous-led arts and cultural experiences to play a larger role in the healing journey for Indigenous people in our community. We are pleased to have successfully applied for funding from NIB Trust to continue this program in 2024-2025 fiscal year to continue this increasingly popular program.

Program Highlights 2023-24:

Clients learned how to sew projects like ribbon skirts, vests and other traditional wear. Clients learned how to sew with a sewing machine and learned skills that are transferable into mending clothing or other items.

Success Story:

Two clients needed their dresses altered for prom but could not afford a tailor, so they learned the skills they needed in order to alter their own dresses for the event at no cost. It is wonderful to see clients learning new skills, feeling proud of their achievements and assisting with financial burdens at the same time.



TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

THE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE TRUST PROVIDES FREE TRANSPORTATION FOR URBAN INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN SMITHERS, TELKWA, HOUSTON, AND THE SURROUNDING AREA.



Our program provides access to urban Indigenous people in our community who require transportation to:

- Doctors appointments
- Grocery stores
- Community events
- Garbage or recycling depots
- As well as those needing support during maintenance of vehicles.
- The transportation program also collaborates with and transports goods for the in-house program.

THE
TRANSPORTATION
PROGRAM SERVED
OVER 156
INDIVIDUALS WITHIN
THE FISCAL YEAR.

PROGRAM SUCCESS STORY:

OUR PROGRAM HAS SUPPORTED CLIENTS WHO HAVE SPECIALIST OR MEDICAN APPOINTMENTS AT THE HOSPITAL AND REQUIRED EMERGENCY SURGERY. WE WERE ABLE TO DRIVE CLIENTS TO AND FROM THEIR APPOINTMENTS. THIS IS AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE AND CLIENTS ARE VERY GRATEFUL FOR THE SUPPORT AS THEY WOULD NOT OTHERWISE HAVE ACCESS TO SAFE TRANSPORTATION.

EMPLOYEMENT LIFE SKILLS & TRAINING (ELST)

The Essential Life Skills program is designed to increase Indigenous participation in our local community workforce through skills building and training.

The objective of this program to support the delivery of employment supports, skills training, and post secondary education supports in Indigenous communities leading to client's employment or self-employment.

Trainings are generally 1-2 days with some exceptions for longer training such as first aid level 3 (2 weeks) which comes with a certificate of completion.

On the educational front, the program worked closely with local educational institutions such as Coast Mountain College and SD54 to provide pathways for further education and certification, helping participants to continue their professional development.

Program highlights from 2023-2024:

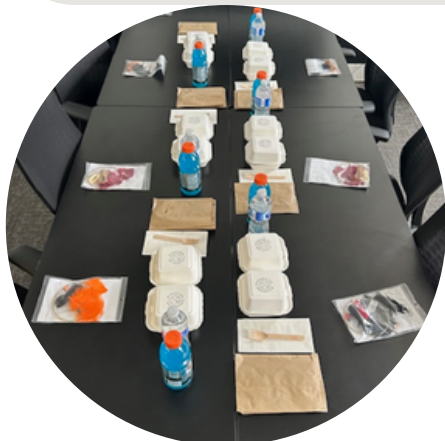
- Resource management
- Hospitality
- Trade skills

And emphasized foundational skills such as:

- Resume building
- Job interview techniques
- Digital literacy.

Collaboration:

This year the ELST program forged strong partnerships with local employers and industry leaders including Jade First Aid, Marks Work Warehouse, and Wet'suwet'en Arts to ensure that the training aligned with current job market demands. This collaboration enabled the program to offer job placements, giving participants practical experience and a foot in the door to potential employment opportunities.



OUR PROGRAM SERVED 70 INDIVIDUALS IN 2023-24 AND SAW 46 PARTICIPATES COMPLETE THE TRAINING

HIV/AIDS AWARENESS PROGRAM

This program, in partnership with Northern Health, is designed to bring awareness about HIV- AIDS Hep C and increase knowledge around prevention of transmission. This is achieved through providing low barrier and non-stigmatizing information, resources and workshops, as well as partnering with in-house programs and local organizations to decrease infections and increase awareness of how HIV-AIDS and Hep C are transmitted and encourage testing.

Program Highlights from 2023-2024:

We developed a new Men's Wellness Group and have seen success in this program designed to increase awareness and wellbeing amongst vulnerable populations. Activities have included creating community amongst men through activities such as drum making and cedar woven headbands workshops.

Our program has distributed thousands of condoms throughout the year including distributing condoms to local organizations like Smithers Secondary School, NWCC (community college), and cafes and bars such as Smithers Brewery.



LEGAL ADVOCACY PROGRAM

DZE L K'ANT FRIENDSHIP CENTRE'S LEGAL ADVOCACY PROGRAM IS DELIVERED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LAW FOUNDATION OF BC.

The Legal Advocacy Program is committed to the advocacy, promotion and education of poverty law rights and benefits. Our program assist with the following:

TENANCY

Issues with landlords such as unfair evictions, repairs, quiet enjoyment, guests, etc, support with Residential Tenancy Branch processes and hearings.

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION BENEFITS

Welfare, hardship, Persons with Persistent and Multiple Barriers benefits, Persons with Disabilities benefits, crisis supplements, general supplements, investigations and reviews.

FEDERAL BENEFITS

Canada Pension Plan- Disability, old age security, guaranteed income
formed decisions about their future.

- Outreach to Isolated Areas: Support was provided to clients from Burns Lake, Telkwa, Houston, Witset, Hazelton, Kispix and Fort Babine using phone, fax and email; and providing bus tickets available to Legal Support clients to facilitate travel to and from the program. This was especially helpful for clients living in Houston and Hazelton.
- Drop in and low barrier services were provided via drop-ins throughout the week. Many clients have barriers to appointments, but by holding a flexible schedule clients were able to learn about the program, identify issues early, and meet the advocate. This format supported early intervention, low-barrier service, and improved engagement.
- The program focused on helping vulnerable clients who were experiencing homelessness to obtain ID documents. Outreach was conducted for this purpose by canvassing the neighbourhood and offering services to clients currently living in the encampment at Veterans Peace Park in Smithers.

THERE WERE 439 FILES COMPLETED BETWEEN FEBRUARY 20TH, 2023 AND FEBRUARY 19TH, 2024.

WORKSHOPS WERE HOSTED FOUR TIMES IN THIS PERIOD. THIS INCLUDED WORKSHOPS ON TENANCY, PWD, AN ID CLINIC, AND A FIRE EXTINGUISHER DEMONSTRATION. WITH FUNDING FROM THE LAW FOUNDATION'S RACIAL JUSTICE GRANT, THE ADVOCACY PROGRAM ALSO BEGAN AND COMPLETED THE FIRST PHASE OF THE POVERTY LAW COMMUNITY CONSULTATION PROJECT BY RUNNING TWO CONSULTATION SESSIONS.



WE ARE PLEASED TO HAVE RECEIVED A RACIAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT FROM THE LAW FOUNDATION ALLOWING US TO CARRY OUT A NUMBER OF CONSULTATION SESSIONS WITH THE COMMUNITY AIMED TO INCREASE OUR UNDERSTANDING OF BARRIERS, NEEDS AND GAPS IN SERVICES.

THE ABORIGINAL FAMILY GATHERINGS PROGRAM

The Family Gathering program enhances relationships and collaboration by connecting families and working collaboratively to support each other, as well as helping to create a community within community networks. Our goal is that families will have strengthened cultural safety and humility and feel included within their support networks.

There were initially between 3 and 5 families in attendance each week. The group grew to 7 families that we currently have. We offer many fun cooking, baking, learning and crafting opportunities aimed at growing together as a family.

Program Highlights from 2023-24:

Throughout the year we were able to show our clients many different ways to stay busy, be creative and get out on the land as well as the importance of self-care and caring for family, friends and those around you.

We learned about the different cultures and where our families originate from such as Europe and from across Canada.



EXCITING EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS:

METIS SCAVENGER HUNT TO FIND ALL THINGS METIS IN PUBLIC PLACES AROUND TOWN. THE FAMILIES HAD FUN RUNNING AROUND TOWN OVER THE WEEK TO FIND ANYTHING METIS RELATED. WE STRATEGICALLY NOTED ABOUT 7 OR 8 PROMINENTLY PLACED ITEMS AND MADE A LIST OF CLUES FOR THEM TO FOLLOW. FAMILIES ENJOYED SPENDING TIME TOGETHER OUTSIDE AND EXPLORING THE TOWN.

WORKSHOP AT RUSTICA BAKERY WHERE THREE FAMILIES CAME TOGETHER WITH OTHER COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO LEARN HOW TO MAKE THEIR OWN PASTRY. PARTICIPANTS WERE TREATED TO BAKED GOODS, TAUGHT PASTRY MAKING STEPS AND GIVEN EXTRA DOUGH TO BRING HOME. LOTS OF LAUGHS AND ENERGY WAS HAD BY ALL IN ATTENDANCE.

MMIWG FAMILY SUPPORT



The MMIWG support program provides support throughout the community for those directly impacted by MMIWG. We offer various workshops, healing circles and traditional work to provide support and promote healing and resilience.

Program Highlights 2023-2024:

This year the program was able to provide individualized trauma informed support families to meet their unique needs and we were able to offer workshops based on clients interests.

Workshops and Events:

We hosted a number of workshops and included work with tobacco, soap berries and sage during meetings. We also came together to paint posters and signs for memorial walks which the clients appreciated.

A Red Dress Photoshoot was held to raise awareness about MMIWG and clients participated and enjoyed this opportunity. It was a moving experience for all involved and provided our program with many powerful photos for use to raise awareness and to promote safety for women and girls.



OUR PROGRAM SERVED BETWEEN 35-50 CLIENTS IN THIS REPORTING PERIOD.

COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN

Community Action Program for Children (CAP-C) is a federal initiative that provides a supportive environment for moms, dads, grandparents and other caregivers and their children aged 0-6. The goals of this program is to:

- improve parenting skills and parent-child relationships
- increasing child self-esteem
- providing child focused activities
- support vulnerable children and families
- strengthen community capacity



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS 2023-2024

This year CAP-C Coalition assisted many new moms with difficulties in breastfeeding, Providing healthy foods on a low budget, learning to make baby food and teething biscuits, having group sessions and family programming has brought many families closer together which in addition has made a lot of new parents feel comfortable and welcome.

WE WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY OF CANADA (PHAC) THEY HAVE BEEN FUNDING THIS PROGRAM IN OUR ORGANIZATION FOR OVER 20 YEARS

SUPPORTS PROVIDED:

- **OUTREACH**
- **CHILD HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**
- **PARENTING CLASSES AND DROP-IN SERVICES**
- **NUTRITIONAL SUPPORT**
- **FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRES**
- **FAMILY CENTERED APPROACHES**

TRAUMA INFORMED MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELLOR

**WE OFFER ONE ON ONE COUNSELING AND GROUP
THERAPY FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES.**

Our program provides:

- Individual and family counselling
- Neurofeedback Therapy sessions
- Cultural workshops, nutrition workshops, yoga/exercise and other workshops
- Food baskets, meals and snacks
- Various trauma informed training
- An additional neurofeedback clinician to expand our services

Our staff attended:

- Advanced neurofeedback training and biweekly case consultations with experts in neurofeedback

The Mental Health Counseling Program provides trauma informed counselling and neurofeedback sessions with a culturally safe focus for Indigenous clients.

The program provides mental health counselling, crisis intervention and neurofeedback sessions, and helps to address food insecurity by providing supplemental food resources. These services are accessed primarily through self-referrals and referrals from other care providers and agencies, but walk-in clients are also accepted.

Additionally, the Mental Health Counsellor meets biweekly with a Clinical Supervisor, who has years of counselling experience working in Indigenous communities throughout Northwest BC.

OUR COUNSELLING SUPPORTS HAVE SERVED APPROXIMATELY 55 CLIENTS IN THE 2023-2024 FISCAL YEAR, WITH 3000 POINTS OF SERVICE.

DZE L K'ANT FRIENDSHIP CENTRE'S NEUROFEEDBACK PROGRAM

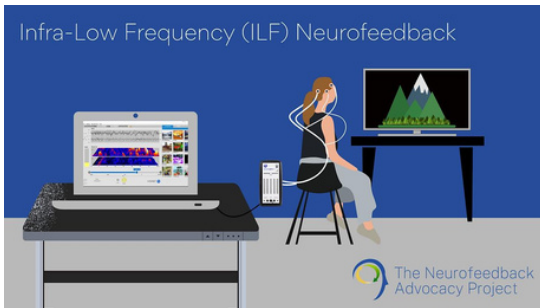


WE PROVIDED NEUROFEEDBACK TO 42 CLIENTS IN 2023-2024 AND PROVIDED 1950 POINTS OF SERVICE

This project was established in April 2023. Since this time we have purchased one set of equipment and trained two clinicians.

By October 2023, we were able to obtain additional funding from the National Association for Friendship Centers to expand our project, purchase another set of equipment and expand our staff.

We now have 3 clinicians on site trained to deliver the program. We have served over 50 clients since the program began. Program has been growing in popularity via word of mouth and referrals from other services. We have seen great interests and positive feedback from clients.



WHAT IS NEUROFEEDBACK?

NEUROFEEDBACK IS A SAFE, NON-INVASIVE, NON-PHARMACOLOGICAL, AND NON-VERBAL APPROACH. IT WORKS BY ENGAGING THE BRAIN'S OWN MECHANISMS OF SELF-REGULATION. NEUROFEEDBACK IS THE DIRECT TRAINING OF BRAIN FUNCTION, THROUGH WHICH THE BRAIN LEARNS TO FUNCTION BETTER AND MORE EFFICIENTLY. THE CLIENT IS INSTRUCTED NOT TO TRY AND DO ANYTHING BEYOND ATTENDING TO THE PROCESS. THE EQUIPMENT HELPS THE BRAIN GAIN OPTIMAL FUNCTION BY PROMOTING SELF-REGULATION THROUGH PROVIDING INFORMATION ON THE BRAIN'S ACTIVITY IN SPECIFIC NEURONAL CIRCUITS. THIS MECHANISM HELPS THE BRAIN CORRECT DYSREGULATION AND THE SYMPTOMS RELATED TO IT.

NEUROFEEDBACK HAS BEEN AROUND SINCE 1960. THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT TYPES OF NEUROFEEDBACK. AT THE DZE L K'ANT FRIENDSHIP CENTRE, WE USE INFRA-LOW FREQUENCY (ILF) NEUROFEEDBACK. ILF NEUROFEEDBACK IS A TYPE OF NEUROFEEDBACK THAT FOCUSES ON BOTH HIGHER FREQUENCY BRAIN WAVES, AS WELL AS EXTREMELY LOW FREQUENCY BRAIN WAVES.

Our Neurofeedback program has helped clients with many mental and physical health issues including:

- Teeth grinding,
- Nightmares & night waking.
- Reduction in chronic pain and aching pain
- Reduced emotional reactivity
- Greater ability to control emotions.

What makes the program unique and innovative?

The Friendship Centre's Neurofeedback program is the only program in the north offering this service free to low income people.

ILF neurofeedback is a symptoms-based approach, and it is an individualized treatment. We tailor the treatment protocol according to each individual nervous system. The training particularizes in terms of sensor placement and specific training frequency, depending on the issues. Meaning, specific symptoms are mapped into specific brain areas. Also, training self-regulation is a moving target. That is why a skilled clinician needs to be in charge of the process.

Neurofeedback is a true "Low-Barrier" treatment. It requires no effort on the part of the client. It can be done with clients of any age, from infants to the elderly. It is compassion-informed, non-judgmental and non-triggering.

Neurofeedback makes sense to clients. Clients understand that their brain is stuck in hypervigilance, hyper-excitability, and/or dysregulation. They know that this is not by choice, but a consequence of events in their life. Neurofeedback does not suppress normal emotions, energy or creativity. Rather it opens possibilities for clients who are otherwise unable to reach their potential.

Finally, we chose to use (ILF) Neurofeedback because it is type that has been specifically effective in the treatment of trauma symptoms, such as hyperarousal, hypervigilant, chronic dissociation, sleep disorders, panic attacks, nightmares, flashbacks, muscle tension, fatigue, lack of concentration, emotional instability, substance use, depressive symptoms and many other symptoms.

THIS PROGRAM IS MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH THE "NEUROFEEDBACK ADVOCACY PROJECT". THIS HAS ALLOWED TRAINING, TECHNICAL SUPPORT, EXPERTISE AND MENTORSHIP TO OUR TEAM. THIS PARTNERSHIP HAS ALLOWED US TO OPERATE THIS SOPHISTICATED TREATMENT MODALITY TO THE HIGHEST STANDARD.

INREACH WORKER, HEALTHY CARE PREGNANCY PROGRAM (HCPP)



Program Objectives:

The Healthy Care Pregnancy Program (HCPP) aims to better support pregnant, postpartum and newly parenting people who use or have used substances. It creates and utilizes formal connections between acute care facilities and community organizations, who are also BCAPOP Program Members.

Program Outcomes:

- Maintaining parent-baby togetherness regardless of custody or guardianship status.**
- Supporting holistic wellness and addressing acute medical complexity and social determinants of health for both the participants and their infants.**
- Building confidence and self-efficacy within participants and their families.**
- Identifying pressure points in the system of care for intervention or support.**

**NUMBER OF CLIENTS SERVED: 15
POINTS OF SERVICE: 500**

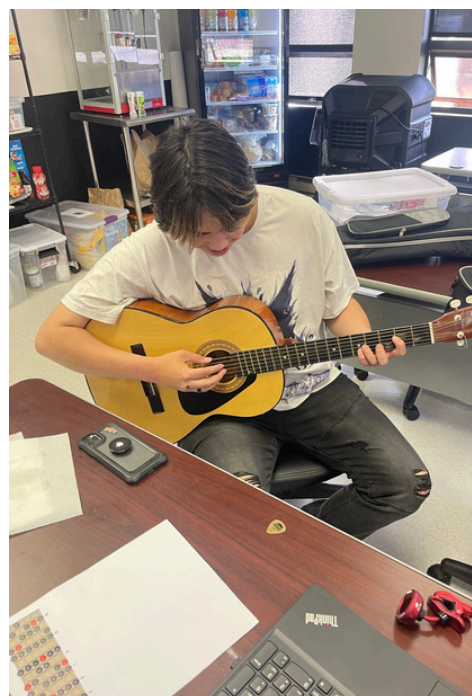
CULTURE IS ALIVE YOUTH PROGRAM

The program offers a number of culturally focussed activities aimed at empowering our youth during a challenging time of their lives as they transition to adulthood. The program is centred around trust building, relationship building and mentorship and through this process we have been able to increase confidence in our youth, support them with social, emotional challenges.

Our program is proud to be providing a support system as youth make the difficult transition between high school and the workforce by providing support for their learning, education and employment goals. We are particularly proud of the close collaborations between our Learning Hub and Employment program which is allowing youth low barrier access to a wide range of education and training and employment opportunities.

This year we provide a range of services to Indigenous youth in our community, including:

- Collaborations with the high school key teachers and Indigenous support workers via School District 54
- Bi-monthly cultural workshops and food sharing - time to come together to do crafts and share food together. This year we hosted popular drum making and cedar basket workshops.
- Driving Lessons- 18 youth participated in these lessons.
- Food skills for families workshops
- Hygiene kit and food support distribution - by partnering with Covid-19 relief funding we were able to provide basic need supports to over 25 youth.
- 18 Mental wellness kits were created specifically for youth.





HOUSTON PROGRAM REPORTS

- ABORIGINAL EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM)
- AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM
- CONNECTIONS PROJECT (YOUTH PROGRAM)
- INDIGENOUS EARLY YEARS PROGRAM
- MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELLOR
- ABORIGINAL EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT (TADPOLES PROGRAM)
- HOUSTON PREGNANCY OUTREACH PROGRAM (POP)

National Indigenous People's Day

The Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre hosted a celebration event at Jamie Baxter Park for National Indigenous Peoples Day on June 21, 2023. This event was to recognize, honour and celebrate the contributions, the history, heritage, resilience and diversity of First Nations, Inuit and Métis across Turtle Island. Over 500 people including schools, community members and other agencies. The event opened with the EWK HIYAH HOZDLI Dance Group Co-op. and showcased Indigenous art, resources, and books. Each tent showcased a different cultural component such as traditional foods and hunting, Metis culture and resources, Healing medicines and ceremony, Drumming, Indigenous early years resources, beading, and more. Other Agencies including ARocha Nature Centre, District of Houston, Houston Volunteer fire fighters, Houston Link to Learning and The Plaza joined us to celebrate this event by volunteering resources(location, bouncy castles etc) or their time to BBQ and serve food, or set up an activity tent. This was one of the largest attended National Indigenous Peoples day event in Houston in over a decade.



ABORIGINAL EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT/FAMILY SUPPORT

The Aboriginal Early Childhood Development program promotes Early Childhood development services, supporting families through a range of services which include prevention, early intervention, education, training and community outreach. The intent of the program is to provide a safe, nurturing environment for children to maximize their growth and enhance their development potential.



Program Highlights 2023-2024:

This year the AECD program provided a range of family and child centered services and activities that enhance parent/ child interaction (parent participating pre- school, pre kindergarten, and drop- in Parenting workshops) as well as held community outreach programs and Food Security programming. Our program also provided education and counselling specific to prenatal, maternal and newborn care, harm reduction strategies and provided support to children and families with special needs.

OUR PROGRAM SERVED AROUND 160 CLIENTS IN 2023-24 AND MADE AROUND 9700 POINTS OF SERVICE.



TS' IDIHDZIK KITCHEN MEANING " GIFTS OF FOOD"

FACILITATES A WEEKLY COMMUNITY KITCHEN WHERE FAMILIES AND CAREGIVERS OF CHILDREN UNDER 6 YRS COME TOGETHER EACH WEEK TO HELP PREPARE A NUTRITIOUS MEAL FOR THEIR FAMILIES TO TAKE HOME AND ENJOY. THE TS'IDIHDZIK PROGRAM, MEANING "GIFTS OF FOOD" IN WET'SU'WET'EN, PROMOTES PEER AND GROUP PARTICIPATION IN A CULTURALLY SAFE SPACE, AND PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN ABOUT HEALTHY COOKING ON A BUDGET AND MEAL PLANNING AND PREPARATION.

WE CURRENTLY OFFER TWO CLASSES (MORNING AND AFTERNOON) AND CURRENTLY SERVE 16 FAMILIES EACH WEEK. THE PROGRAM HAS BECOME ONE OF OUR MOST POPULAR AECD PROGRAMS, PROVIDING SO MUCH MORE THAN A MEAL. THE PROGRAM PROVIDES CHILD MINDING AND SPACE FOR CAREGIVERS TO CONNECT IN A HEALTHY WAY AND HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO COOK WITH FRESH INGREDIENTS, AND REDUCE THE STRESS OF PURCHASING HIGH PRICED PRODUCE IN TODAY'S ECONOMY. THE PROGRAM ALSO HAS SEASONAL CANNING WORKSHOPS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LAND BASED FORGING.

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

The After School Program is designed to provide a fun and structured week for children after school. Our program is a free, licensed childcare program for children ages 8-12. Our programming provides children with educational, culturally relevant and fun activities and experiences that allow them to feel a sense of community and belonging as well as providing them with healthy meals and snacks,

Success stories:

This year we supported many children to find confidence and friends. In particular neurodivergent students were supported to form connections that have gone beyond our programs into their social and school lives.

HEALTHY SNACKS ARE PROVIDED TO THE CHILDREN DAILY SUCH AS FRUIT, DAIRY, MEAT AND VEGETABLES.



LEARNING ABOUT TRADITIONAL MEDICINE:

THE CHILDREN LEARNED HOW TO MAKE THEIR OWN SALVE FOR THEMSELVES AND FAMILY, WHILE LEARNING THE HISTORY AND BENEFICIAL PROPERTIES OF CEDAR AND DANDELION.

MMWG AWARENESS:

THE CHILDREN SHOWED RESPECT AND SOLIDARITY AS WE ALL SANG AND DRUMMED FOR OUR STOLEN SISTERS AND SHOWED OUR SUPPORT WITHIN THE COMMUNITY. THEY ASKED QUESTIONS AND EXPANDED THEIR KNOWLEDGE ON THE SUBJECT. IT WAS A SUCCESSFUL DAY FULL OF RESPECT, LOVE, AND KNOWLEDGE.

Our program served 30 clients this year and provided meals and snacks daily, as well as distributing over 15 hygiene kits.

FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM

The Family support worker plans and organizes groups for parents and caregivers of children 0-6 years of age. Workshops provided a wide range of topics and activities ie, cultural, mental health, baking/cooking. This year our program was able to provide a variety of groups for families. Workshops included cultural activities/crafts, self care, baking.

Program success:

Our program supports many clients who are single mothers while others are experiencing violence in the home. We have supported many clients facing isolation and violence to become confident to make positive changes and access services. Many of our clients become consistent participants, coming to groups and moving forward toward healing.



LEARNING ABOUT TRADITIONAL MEDICINE:

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**OUR PROGRAM SERVED 736 NUMBER OF CLIENTS IN 2023-2024
WE PROVIDED 12,529 POINTS OF SERVICE FOR 2023-2024
OVER 235 FOOD SUPPORTS DURING COMMUNITY KITCHEN**

CONNECTIONS PROGRAM

Connections Youth Program offers support to youth in meeting with MCFD/school, lifeskills, and through youth programming Monday to Friday and provides support to youth ages 13-19.

Program Highlights 2023-2024:

Youth programs offer cultural based workshops that allow youth to connect to their culture, provide a safe space for youth and foster a sense of community. Our program also provides youth with meals and bagged lunches and bagged meals for weekends to combat food insecurity and ensure youth are receiving healthy and nutritious snacks and meals.

Success Stories:

As a program we brought our youth to the Gather Our Voices youth conference. There were three youth in particular that loved the conference and learned a lot and felt very inspired after attending.

We were able to support 2 of our youth as they worked to graduate, attend school meetings and make plans to keep on track.



INDIGENOUS EARLY YEARS PROGRAM

The Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre's Indigenous Early Years Program provides culturally appropriate programming for children and families, including weekly drop-in programming, referrals, home visit support, and one-on-one support to early years families in Houston and its surrounding communities. Its focus is on healthy child development, connections and referrals, and positive support for early years families. Cultural workshops, parenting workshops, child development programs are all offered as some of the Indigenous Early Years Programs.

The service framework's vision is that children and families have the supports and services that they need when they need them.

MCFD (Ministry of Children and Family Development) Early Years services are intended to:

1. Support the well-being of children and families
2. Serve as barrier-free access point
3. Provide clear pathways to enhanced supports and services including Infant Mental Health and Children & Youth With Special Needs

**Our
program
served 92
families in
2023-24
and made
45,348
points of
service.**



One On One Support

IEY offers one on one support, by social media, phone or email or in person. Home visit support, and referrals



IEY Weekly Program

Offers weekly drop in program that helps support family navigation, positive child development, cultural and community connections, skill and resource building and referrals.



Cultural Connection

Cultural workshops- talking circles, cultural workshops, traditional parenting workshops, building supportive allies, traditional vest and ribbon skirt making,



Referral

Referrals to outer agencies- child development FNHA, etc support for MCFD/Family navigation EI, CERB applications, Covid recovery benefit status renewal applications, Community network support- (Mill Closure etc)

INDIGENOUS EARLY YEARS PROGRAM (IEY) - CONTINUED

Program Highlights 2023-2024:

- National Indigenous Peoples Day (500 people attended)
- Porcupine Workshop & Talk about Tanning workshop (30 adults and 20 children attended)
- Story walk- various locations, various events (20 people attended)
- Community Early Learning (Over 40 children in a 3 day period)
- M.M.I.W.G.- Stand in solidarity on Highway 16 (Over 40 people attended)
- Teddy Bear Picnic (Over 60 people attended)
- Orange shirt day week (Over 40 people attended)
- Honour Your Health Program- 8-to-12-week program (Consistent 8 to 10 people attend in house weekly program, as well as and additional 20 people participate in the online forum)
- Play Gym- Gross Motor Active play program (Between 30-40 participants every week)
- Deer Tanning Workshop (Over 50 students participated in each of the 4 tanning workshops)



Success Stories/ Program Highlights:

Each week we facilitate a workshop based on the participants interests, goals that align with the medicine wheel. Some of the workshops we have done are medicine making, dream workshop, get to know you -personality tests, nutrition workshop, rethink your drink, walking groups, and more. Each week we have a consistent 6 to 12 participants.

Our families are building stronger personal and parenting skills, community, family and supports, learning ways to connect to land and culture and finding a personal sense of who they are and where they belong, finding healing in land and belonging in community. Our program has seen a reduction in addiction use, mental health issues and positive shifts in lifestyle. Many of our families are getting back to the roots of who they are and where they are from, regaining a sense of pride and love for themselves and their culture. Connecting to land-based healing, ceremony, and to have a place where they can be a family and belong has had a positive impact on their lifestyle, coping abilities, and strengthened their self-esteem and provided mature healthy connections and growth.

Parenting education has reduced the risk of child abuse and neglect. Education around parenting skills and strategies, age-appropriate behaviors and work around self-esteem has encouraged positive parenting practice.



HOUSTON MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELLING PROGRAM



The Mental Health Counselling program was designed and developed to provide mental health support and counselling services to members of the community. The aim of this program is to provide accessible and culturally safe counselling to adults who are interested. The ultimate goal is to give clients a space to feel safe, be heard, and feel empowered.

Program highlights 2023-2024:

The mental health counselling program provides support to community members who are struggling with a myriad of mental health concerns, including depression, anxiety, grief, substance use etc. Many clients expressed gratitude towards the availability of counselling services. The program delivered some group sessions and workshops, and predominantly focuses on individualized sessions and approaches.

Success Stories:

The program has provided support to single parents navigating challenges such as housing insecurity and leaving an adverse relationships. We are witnessed the mental health and stability improve significantly to the point of stable housing and employment.

We are pleased to have been able to support clients struggling with substance use through our counselling services, as well as referrals and access to treatment. Currently we have clients who have successfully maintained sobriety while working towards achieving personal goals in life.

HOUSTON & DEASE LAKE PREGNANCY OUTREACH PROGRAMMING

The Pregnancy Outreach Program is designed to provide specific prenatal, maternal and newborn care to encourage healthy development of children ages 0-1 and support expecting and new parents.

Program Highlights 2023-24:

Groups learned how to make baby food, diaper cream, nipple cream, make their own baby wipes, laundry soap, bug repellent and anti-itch creams, medicine bags and drums.

We also had a paramedicine professional come in to help teach basic CPR and choking prevention for infants and toddlers.

OUR PROGRAM SERVED BETWEEN OVER 300 CLIENTS AND MADE 167,037 POINTS OF SERVICE.

WE ALSO DISTRIBUTED OVER 500:

- KITS OF DIAPERS
- WIPES, CLOTHING
- BOTTLES, SHOES
- BABY SHAMPOOS
- BODY WASH
- TEETHING KITS
- PRENATAL PILLS
- PREGNANCY TESTS
- BREAST PUMPS
- HUMIDIFIERS
- DIAPER CREAMS
- PREGNANCY READY KITS,
- WELCOME KITS FOR BABIES.
- INFORMATION ON MENTAL HEALTHY, POST PARTUM AND NUTRITION FOR MOHTERS AND BABIES

OUR PROGRAM HAS BEEN ABLE TO PROVIDE A CONNECTION PLACE FOR MANY SINGLE PARENTS AND YOUNG MOTHERS WHO ARE EXPERIENCING ISOLATION. BY PROVIDING A SUPPORT SYSTEM WE INCREASE THE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF THE MOTHERS, BABY AND ENTIRE FAMILY.

THROUGH OUT PROGRAMMING WE HAVE WITNESSED MANY CLIENTS INCREASE THEIR CONNECITONS AND CONFIDENCE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.



ACKNOWLEDGING OUR KEY FUNDERS 2023-2024

- National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC)
- BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC)
- Northern Health
- Law Foundation
- BC Housing
- CMHC
- Northern Development Initiative
- Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program/Infrastructure
- Aboriginal Headstart Association BC
- Ministry of Child and Family Development
- Department of Women and Gender Equity
- Civil Forfeiture
- Lu'ma Native Housing
- BC Aboriginal Childcare Society
- United Way Northern BC
- New Horizons for seniors



ACKNOWLEDGING OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- Office of the Wet'suwet'en
- Witset First Nation
- Lake Babine Nation
- Alpenhorn/Noir Restaurant
- Sullivan's Motor Products
- Telly's Restaurant & Grill
- Nature's Pantry
- Smokescreen Printing
- Marks Workwarehouse
- Smithers Brewing Co
- District of Houston
- Town of Smithers
- Smithers Public Library
- Smithers & Area Chamber of Commerce
- Wetzinkwa Community Forest
- Dungate Community Forest
- Smithers District Chamber Of commerce.
- The Houston Leisure facility.



Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre
1188 Main Street Smithers,
Ph: 250-847-5211
Email: info@dzekant.com
www.dzekant.com
www.facebook.com/dzelant

